ANCIENT SKIES

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FORBIDDEN ARCHEOLOGY: EVIDENCE FOR EXTREME HUMAN ANTIQUITY AND THE ANCIENT ASTRONAUT HYPOTHESIS

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Proponents of the ancient astronaut hypothesis say that many features of human civilization can be explained by past extraterrestrial contacts. Some researchers explain the very origin of the human species through such contacts. Generally, the proposed scenarios involve accepting the standard evolutionary account of hominid evolution, with a relatively late extraterrestrial intervention giving rise to anatomically modern human beings. In this paper, I shall not directly discuss specific theories of human origins involving extraterrestrial intervention. Instead, I will offer a general caution that such speculations regarding human origins should take into account the actual physical evidence for human antiquity. Careful investigation shows that the full range of this evidence is not reported in current literature. When all relevant evidence is taken into account,it becomes apparent that one should not link extraterrestrial theories of human origins too closely to the currently accepted scientific ideas of human evolution.

According to standard ideas, the human line branched off from the ancestors of the modern chimpanzees about 5 million years ago. The first hominids, or humanlike primates, were the australopithecines. Further developments led to Homo habilis and Homo erectus. Finally, at about 100,000 years ago, anatomically modern humans like ourselves appeared. Scientists say the factual evidence supports this view and no other.But in 1984,at the request of my colleague Dr.Richard Thompson of the Bhaktivedanta Institute, I launched an 8-year investigation into the entire history of archeology and anthropology, with some astonishing results. These results were reported in the massive 900-page book Forbidden Archeology (1), which provoked shockwaves of outrage from mainstream archeologists and anthropologists. This book has since been released in abridged popular form as The Hidden History of the Human Race.(2) The basic message of these books is this - the complete archeological record shows that humans have been present on this planet for hundreds of millions of years.

Our Ancient Astronaut Society colleague Walter J. Langbein put it very nicely in a review of Forbidden Archeology for the Austrian journal PARA: "If we imagine the history of humanity as a giant museum, containing all knowledge on this topic, then we shall find that several of the rooms of this museum have been locked. Scientists have locked away the facts that contradict the generally accepted picture of history. Michael A. Cremo and Richard L. Thompson have, however, opened many of the locked doors and allowed lay persons as well as scientists to see inside."(3)

So what kind of evidence do we find in the locked rooms of the museum of the history of humanity? Let us begin with one example, which is typical of many others documented in Forbidden Archeology. In the year 1852, the journal Scientific American carried an intriguing report of a metallic vase blasted out of solid rock at Dorchester, Massachusetts, near the city of Boston. Describing the vase, which was about 4.5 inches high, the report said: "The body of this vessel resembles zinc in color, or a composition metal in which there is a considerable portion of silver, and around the lower part of the vessel, a vine, or wreath, also inlaid with silver. The chasing, carving, and enlaying are exquisitely done by the art of some cunning workman. This curious and unknown vessel was blown out of the solid pudding stone, fifteen feet below the surface." The "pudding stone" is known to geologists as the Roxbury Conglomerate, and according to the United States Geological Survey, this rock is of Precambrian age, over 600 million years old. Given that the vase is of human manufacture, this is quite extraordinary.According to standard views,there would have been no life on land at this time, and only simple forms of marine life in the earth's oceans.

Before proceeding onto other examples of evidence for extreme human antiquity,let me pause to explain why I undertook this research effort.As a member of the Bhaktivedanta Institute, which is the science studies branch of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness, I have deeply studied the ancient Sanskrit writings of India. Among these writings are the Puranas, or histories. The Puranas contain accounts of human civilizations existing on this planet for hundreds of millions of years. During this time,human beings like ourselves coexisted with intelligent races of apelike creatures,such as the Vanaras. For example, in the Indian epic called the Ramayana, which deals with events that took place over one million years ago,we find the humanlike avatar Ramachandra leading an army of Vanaras. This suggests that in the distant past humans coexisted with more apelike humanoid creatures and did not evolve from them.

Furthermore, the Puranic time is cyclical, rather than linear. In other words, there is a recurrent patterning of time. This time concept is very similar to the time concept of the classical Greek thinkers such as Plato and Aristotle. Aristotle, for

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example said that the great achievements of human civilization had been invented several times in the past, in the course of cyclical time.(4)

As I mentioned in a paper that I presented at the World Archeological Congress in New Delhi last December (5), one can from the Puranic model of time make two predictions about the archeological record. This first prediction is that one should expect to find a bewildering mixture of human fossils and artifacts, some appearing quite advanced and others appearing quite primitive, going back hundreds of millions of years. And in truth, one does find this. And the second prediction is that this archeological evidence for coexistence of humans and more apelike creatures will be edited by establishment scientists to conform to their linear progressive concept of time and evolution, with simple forms existing earlier and more complex ones later. And in fact, one does find this. Scientists have indeed selectively suppressed the abundant evidence for the extreme antiquity of anatomically "modern" humans. This suppression has taken place by a process of knowledge filtration, whereby reports conforming to certain preconceived notions are preserved in scientific discourse and reports not conforming to these preconceived notions are dropped from scientific discourse. I am not here talking of the normal process of sifting good reports from bad, by impartial application of reasonable standards. Instead, I am referring to the unfair application of a double standard in the treatment of evidence.

Supporters of the ancient astronaut hypothesis are well aware of how this knowledge filtration process operates in suppressing evidence for extraterrestrial contacts with human civilizations. So we should not be surprised to see the same process of suppression operating in other critical areas of scientific inquiry. Certainly, we should not be complacent, and assume without question that what we are told by spokespersons for the scientific establishment about human origins and antiquity is necessarily correct.

The process of knowledge filtration in the study of human origins has been going on systematically for about 150 years. Let us now consider some specific cases of how the process of knowledge filtration operates. One such case is from the nineteenth century, when the active suppression of evidence for extreme human antiquity was beginning. In 1849, gold was discovered in California. Miners rushed there to extract it. In the beginning they simply panned gold from the streams, but later they began digging mineshafts into the sides of mountains. Many such mines were opened at Table Mountain in Tuolumne County. The deposits at Table Mountain are covered by hundreds of feet of solid basalt,preventing objects from entering from above. The gold-bearing gravels near the bedrock are said by modern geologists to be from 33 to 55 million years old (6). Miners recovered human artifacts and human skeletal remains from mineshafts at this level. Such artifacts and fossils were also found in gravels from the higher sub-basaltic gravels, which are at least 9 million years old. These objects were found not only at Table Mountain, but at many other locations in the same region. Among the artifacts discovered in the mines were obsidian spear points and stone mortars and pestles, such as the stone mortar and pestle recovered by J.H.Neale 1,500 feet inside the Montezuma Tunnel mineshaft at Table Mountain. This specimen, found in the gravels near the bedrock, would thus be between 33 and 55 million years old. All of these discoveries were collected and reported to the scientific world by Dr. J.D. Whitney (7), the state geologist of California, in a book published by Harvard University's Peabody Museum of Natural History.

One might argue that the discoveries were made by miners rather than professional scientists. But one must recognize that most of the Java Homo erectus discoveries and many of the Australopithecus discoveries in Africa were made by paid native collectors who then turned them over to professional scientists. Furthermore, a professional scientist, Clarence D. King, a geologist of the United States Geological Survey, made an important discovery of a stone grinding implement at Table Mountain (8). He personally took it out of the rock, in which it was tightly embedded. The rock at that level was at least 9 million years old.

So what happened to these very well documented discoveries, placing human beings in California up to 55 million years ago? William H. Holmes, a very powerful anthropologist working at the Smithsonian Institution, in Washington, D.C., used his prestige and influence to discredit Dr. Whitney and his discoveries. Why? Because they contradicted the emerging theory that human beings had evolved fairly recently from more apelike ancestors.

Holmes (9) wrote: "Perhaps if Professor Whitney had fully appreciated the story of human evolution as it is understood today, he would have hesitated to announce the conclusions formulated, notwithstanding the imposing array of testimony with which he was confronted." In other words, if the facts do not conform to the favored theory, then the facts, even an imposing array of them, must be set aside.

Holmes found it troubling that the implements found in the mines resembled those of the California Indians of recent history. Striking a similar note, archeologist George F. Carter, noted for his controversial views on early man in North America, wrote to me on January 26, 1994: "If your table on p. 391 were correct, then the minimum age for the artifacts at Table Mountain would be 9 million [years old]. Would you think then of a different creation - [one that] disappeared - and then a new start? Would it simply replicate the archeology of California 9 million years later? Or the inverse. Would the Californians 9 million years later replicate the materials under Table Mountain?" Yes, and why not? That is exactly what the evidence suggests - an extreme antiquity for the human race with recurring cultural manifestations in the course of cyclical time.

So here we have some very good evidence for the existence of human beings as much as 55 million years ago in California. Some might be more happy with remains of metal machines than stone tools, but that is simply a matter of taste. Stone tools of the kind found in California are just as good evidence for a human presence as metal machinery. Furthermore, our present kind of industrial civilization may be a rather unique occurrence in cyclical time. Even in terms of classical history, our current level and mode of industry is a product of the past couple of centuries. Preceding it were many highly developed urban civilizations that were not based on widespread modern manufacturing technologies. And in the not too distant future humanity might return to that more traditional pattern. And while this does not rule out the existence of high technology artifacts in the distant past, it may mean that they were somewhat rarer than we might expect, given our current level of industrial civilization. In other words, we should not necessarily expect to find lots of computers and automobiles in ancient deposits.

The California discoveries also provide very good evidence for suppression of evidence by Holmes and others. Someone might argue that such things may have happened in the nineteenth century but not today. But as we shall see in our next case, suppression of evidence that contradicts the idea of a recent human origin is still going on. In the 1970s, Virginia Steen-McIntyre was a young geologist working for the United States Geological Survey. She took part in the dating of an archeological site in Mexico - at a place called Hueyatlaco near the city of Puebla. Anthropologist Cynthia Irwin-Williams

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had recovered advanced stone tools from this site. Tools of this level of sophistication are normally attributed to anatomically modern humans, and not to apemen such as Homo erectus. Using four different methods (uranium series, tephra hydration, fission track, and stratigraphy), Virginia Steen-McIntyre and her colleagues obtained dates of over 250,000 years for the Hueyatlaco site.(10)

This was unexpected for two reasons. According to standard views, human beings did not enter North America until about 25,000 years ago, at most, with conservative scientists favoring an entry time of 12,000 years. Furthermore, human beings capable of making such tools did not come into existence until about 100,000 years ago. The principal anthropologist at the site was quite unhappy with the dates obtained by Virginia Steen-McIntyre and her colleagues. She wanted a date of 25,000 or less, not 250,000 years! Virginia Steen-McIntyre, however, remained firm in her conviction that the age of 250,000 years was correct. But she paid a considerable price for her conviction. She found it difficult to get her report published, she was labeled a publicity seeker within her profession, she lost a teaching position she held at an American university, and found that her career as a geologist was blocked.

Describing her experience with the knowledge filtration process, Virginia Steen-McIntyre wrote in a letter (March 30, 1981) to Estella Leopold, associate editor of Quaternary Research: "The problem as I see it is much bigger than Hueyatlaco. It concerns the manipulation of scientific thought through the suppression of 'Enigmatic Data,' data that challenges the prevailing mode of thinking. Hueyatlaco certainly does that! Not being an anthropologist, I didn't realize the full significance of our dates back in 1973, nor how deeply woven into our thought the current theory of human evolution has become. Our work at Hueyatlaco has been rejected by most archaeologists because it contradicts that theory, period."

The case of Virginia Steen-McIntyre shows the suppression of evidence by very direct means. In other cases, the process of knowledge filtration is more subtle. It can take the form of inability to properly evaluate evidence because of strongly held theoretical preconceptions. For example, in 1979 researchers in Tanzania found sets of footprints in volcanic ash deposits about 3.6 million years old. According to Mary Leakey (11) and other scientists, these footprints are indistinguishable from modern human footprints. The usual explanation is that the footprints were made by Australopithecus, the apeman of that period. But careful study shows that none of the fossil foot bones of Australopithecus fit the Laetoli prints (12). Among other things, Australopithecus had toes much longer than those of modern human beings. Others have suggested that an as yet unknown apeman with humanlike feet made the prints. This is possible, but as of today, the only creatures known to science that could make the prints are human beings like ourselves. But most scientists, including those involved in the Laetoli discoveries, would not even dream of considering this possibility.They are absolutely convinced that anatomically modern human beings evolved about 100,000 years ago and could not possibly have been present 3.6 million years ago in Africa.

One might ask if there are any human skeletal remains of that age, and the answer is yes. For example, such fossils occur at Castenedolo, in northern Italy, near Brescia. There the Italian geologist Giuseppe Ragazzoni (13) collected bones of 4 individuals from a blue clay formation of Middle Pliocene age - about 3 or 4 million years old. The skeletal remains show the Castenedolo individuals were anatomically modern. Some have suggested that the skeletons arrived in their positions by burial in fairly recent times, but as a professional geologist Ragazzoni was well aware of this possibility. He carefully inspected the overlying layers of sediment and found them undisturbed. A skeleton of similar age was found by other researchers at Savona, Italy, and details of its discovery were reported to the scientific world by Arthur Issel.(14)

But many influential scientists were committed to fairly recent appearance of the modern human type by evolution from primitive apelike creatures, and they opposed such discoveries on theoretical grounds. Some scientists thought this unfair. Speaking of the finds of Pliocene age at Castenedolo, Savona, and elsewhere, the Italian anatomist Giuseppe Sergi protested: "By means of a despotic scientific prejudice, call it what you will, every discovery of human remains in the Pliocene has been discredited."(15)

British archeologist R.A.S. Macalister provides a good example of such scientific prejudice. In 1921 he wrote about the Castenedolo finds: "There must be something wrong somewhere." (16) But why? Had not the bones been discovered by a professional geologist in a layer of undisturbed Pliocene clay? That was not good enough for Macalister, who said of the Castenedolo bones: "If they really belonged to the stratum in which they were found, this would imply an extraordinarily long standstill for evolution. It is much more likely that there is something amiss with the observations." (17) Quite simply, Macalister was inclined to reject the Castenedolo fossils because they violated his evolutionary preconceptions. He further stated: "The acceptance of a Pliocene date for the Castenedolo skeletons would create so many insoluble problems that we can hardly hesitate in choosing between the alternatives of adopting or rejecting their authenticity."(18). Macalister, of course, rejected their authenticity, and given his prominent position, this rejecting carried tremedous authority. Here we see the process of knowledge filtration operating. Good evidence is set aside, simply because it violates the concept of a recent evolutionary origin of the modern human type.

Keep in mind that the Castenedolo fossils show that there were anatomically human beings present on earth at the same time that the Laetoli footprints were made in East Africa, about 4 million years ago. There is also some fragmentary fossil evidence from Africa itself. In 1965, anthropologists Bryan Patterson and William W. Howells found at Kanapoi, Kenya, a fragment of a humerus (upper arm bone). Upon examining it, they found it to be almost exactly like a modern human humerus.(19) Other researchers have found it to be different from those of the australopithecines.(20) The Kanapoi humerus is 4-5 million years old. Considered alone, it is merely suggestive of a human presence, but when taken in the context of the Laetoli footprints and the Castenedolo skeletons, which are of the same age, the case for a human presence 4 million years ago becomes quite strong.

And we can go much further back in time. The French anthropologist Gabriel de Mortillet, in his book Le Préhistorique,(21) tells of a complete anatomically modern human skeleton found in a Miocene formation at Midi de France (at least 5 million years old and perhaps as much as 25 million years old) and another such skeleton found in an Eocene formation at Delémont, Switzerland (at least 38 million years old). There are human artifacts of similar antiquity, among them the stone tools found by Carlo Ribeiro (22), head of the Geological Survey of Portugal, in Miocene formations near Lisbon; stone tools found by Louis Bourgeois (23) in a Miocene formation at Thenay, France; and stone tools found by Fritz Noetling (24), of the Geological Survey of India, in a Miocene formation in Burma. These discoveries, made in the late nineteenth century, were published in scientific journals and discussed in scientific conferences.The only reason

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for their absence from current textbooks is that they contradict the idea of a recent human origin.

From the United States comes a human skeleton found 90 feet deep in coal in Macoupin County, Illinois. Immediately above the skeleton were 2 feet of unbroken slate rock. The coal in which the skeleton was found is from the Carboniferous period, making the fossil about 300 million years old. The report of this discovery was printed in the December 1862 edition of a scientific journal called The Geologist.

Here again, there are human artifacts of similar antiquity. The June 11, 1891 edition of the Morrisonville Times newspaper, of Morrisonville, Illinois, in the United States, carried a report of a gold chain discovered inside a solid piece of coal. The chain was found by Mrs. S.W. Culp, wife of the newspaper's publisher, when she was breaking a lump of coal. According to the Illinois State Geological Survey, the coal containing the chain is of Carboniferous age, about 300 million years old. In 1897, a coal miner working in a mine near Webster, Iowa, in the United States, found an unusual carving on a piece of stone. The Daily News of Omaha, Nebraska (April 2, 1897) said: "The stone is of dark grey color and about two feet long, one foot wide and four inches in thickness. Over the surface of the stone, which is very hard, lines are drawn at angles forming perfect diamonds. The center of each diamond is a fairly good face of an old man...." Also of interest is an iron pot found in a block of coal in the year 1912 by Frank J. Kenwood. The discovery occurred at the Municipal Electric Plant in Thomas, Oklahoma, where the coal was burned to generate power. Kenwood wrote in a notarized affidavit: "I came upon a solid chunk of coal which was too large to use. I broke it with a sledge hammer. This iron pot fell from the center, leaving the impression of mould of the pot in the piece of coal."(25) The coal was traced by Kenwood to the Wilburton Mine. According to the Oklahoma Geological Survey the coal in that mine is about 312 million years old.

In this paper, I have mentioned only a few of the hundreds of well documented cases showing the extreme antiquity of the human race on this planet. Undoubtedly there is an extraterrestrial dimension to the origin of the human species. But extraterrestrial contacts and interventions should be considered within the framework of a terrestrial human presence extending back hundreds of millions of years, in the course of a time flow that may manifest repetitive patterning.

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MAY 14-JUNE 1, 1996. Ancient Astronaut Society Member Expedition to PERU. Contact the Society Headquarters for prices and details.

AUGUST 3-8, 1997. Ancient Astronaut Society World Conference at the Sheraton Plaza Hotel, Orlando, FL.

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